There is no proposal to extend the term of the Commission beyond 31st October, 1993. An expenditure of Rs. 52,64,000 has been incurred on the Commission during the period 24 July, 1990 to 30 April, 1993

**Arsenic Related Diseases in West Bengal**

*240. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of people in West Bengal are dying due to arsenic related diseases;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to send a Central Team to West Bengal to know the cause of the arsenic related diseases;

(c) whether Government also propose to seek the help of WHO for the patients off arsenic related diseases in West Bengal; and

(d) if so, what other remedial steps Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) According to the State Government no deaths have taken place.

(b) The All India Institute of Hygiene & Public Health, Calcutta and the National Drinking Water Mission have already carried out indepth studies in the matter.

(c) Indian Council of Medical Research, New Delhi have reported that an expert from the World Health Organisation has also visited the affected areas.

(d) The National Drinking Water Mission have asked the State Government to arrange for alternative water supply to the affected villages and if, equired, prepare project for assistance from Govt. of India.

**Setting up a Central Zoo Authority**

1701. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY:
SHRI BISHAMBHAR NATH PANDE

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a Central Zoo Authority was set up during 1992;

(b) if so, what are its objective; and

(c) to what extent those objectives have been achieved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) (a) Yes Sir.

(b) The objectives of the Central Zoo Authority are as under:

1. to have a unifrom pattern of scientific zoo management in the country.

2. to specify the minimum standards for housing upkeep and veterinary care of the animals kept in a zoo.

3. to evaluate and assess the functioning of zoos with resect to the standards or norms prescribed.

4. to recognise or derecognise a zoo.

5. to identify endangered species of wild animals for purpose of captive breeding and assigning responsibility in this regard to a zoo;

6. To coordinate the acquisition; exchange and loaning of animals for breeding purpose.

7. to ensure maintenance of stud books of endangered species of wild animals bred in captivity.

8. To identify priorities and themes with regard to display of captive animals in a zoo.

9. to coordinate research and training

10. to provide technical assistance to zoos for their proper management on scientific lines.

(c) (i) Rules for recognition of zoos have been framed.

(ii) Process of evaluation of recognition of the zoo in India has been initiated.

Central Zoo Authority has initiated action in pursuance of its aforementioned objectives and comprehensive; recognition of Zoo Rules have been framed under Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 as amended in 1991.

**Botanical Survey of India**

1702. SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a standing agreement between the Staff Side and the Government to the effect that Chartered bus services from different points in Calcutta to Botanical Survey of India, Calcutta would be into service for the benefit of the staff and scientists of BSI;

(b) if so, the reason for reported non grant of permission to grant subsidy to accept the lowest tender offered by an operator to run the said bus services; and

(c) whether Government propose to allow the Botanical Survey of India to accept the lowest tender and continue the operation of Chartered Bus services for the benefit of Staff and Scientists of BSI?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) to (b): In 1974, the Government of India, in the then Department of Science & Technology: had agreed, on a representation made by the staff of the Botanical Survey of India (BSI), to hire chartered buses for the transportation of the staff from Calcutta to Howrah; following the shifting of some portion of the office of the BSI to the Indian Botanic Garden at Howrah. The original arrangement provided for chartering of buses from the Calcutta State Transport Corporation @ Rs. 25|- per month per person for the staff members who wished to make use of this facility. This was a non-subsidised arrangement.

However, over subsequent years the original arrangements were changed and increases in the rate of hire of buses were permitted to the extent that the arrangement could no longer be regarded as non-subsidised The necessity for providing transport has also been reduced with the shift of the headquarters of the BSI from Howrah to Calcutta. It is expected that with the construction of the new bridge over the river Hooghly, traffic congestions would ease. It also appears that no such facility is available to the employees of other Government departments in Calcutta. In any case, subsidy on transport is not permitted under present Government rules.

Keeping all these factors in mind, Government has directed the BSI to terminate the former arrangements with effect from 1.4.93.

(c) Does not arise

**Gas Leakage from Chemical Plants in Thane, Maharashtra**

1703. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that due to gas leakage from chemical plants in Thane, Maharashtra 11 persons were affected in the second week of March, 1993; if so, the details of the incident;